



Spring Issue

CALLING THE SHOTS

A publication of the Hawaii Immunization Program

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Where Are All the Vaccines?

By Loriann M. Kanno, PharmD.

Currently, several vaccine manufacturers are experiencing vaccine shortages and/or delays in the shipping of their product to providers. Details on the cause for the shortages have not been forthcoming, however, some reasons that have been cited include an increase in the demand on remaining manufacturers to fill current supply needs due to the discontinuation of vaccine production by other manufacturers, and interruptions in manufacturing operations.

The shortage of tetanus and diphtheria toxoids (Td) resulted from the discontinuation of production of tetanus toxoid-containing products by one of the two U.S. manufacturers. In order to maximize Hawaii's limited supply and in order to insure that the vaccine is made available for those most in need, the VFC Program stopped distribution of Td vaccine to individual providers in July 2001. With the assistance of the Public Health Nursing (PHN) Clinics, the Hawaii Immunization Program (HIP) is able to make Td available for your VFC and non-VFC patients. If you no longer have Td vaccine on hand, you may refer your patients requiring a Td vaccine to a PHN Clinic. Patients must present with a prescription for the Td vaccine. A valid indication for the administration of the vaccine must also be included on the prescription. Please be reminded that the CDC has recommended that all routine **Td boosters** in adolescents and adults be **delayed until vaccine becomes available**.

Diphtheria and tetanus toxoids and acellular pertussis vaccine (DTaP) remains in short supply, and the shortage may continue throughout 2002. The shortage, which began in 2000 when two manufacturers stopped production of DTaP, appears greatest in the public sector. During the shortage of DTaP, the ACIP recommends that **providers who do not have enough DTaP** to vaccinate all children with 5 doses give priority to vaccinating infants with the first 3 doses.



To ensure an adequate supply of DTaP to vaccinate infants, providers should first defer vaccination of children aged 15-18 months with the fourth DTaP dose. If deferring the fourth dose does not leave enough DTaP to vaccinate infants, then the fifth DTaP dose should also be deferred*. When the DTaP shortage ends, providers should recall and administer DTaP to all children who missed a dose.¹

Some providers have been experiencing shortages in their supplies of MMR® and Varivax® vaccines. Merck & Company, Inc. recently apologized for what they described as an "intermittent supply shortage" of many of their vaccines. In their letter of apology Merck attributes their vaccine shortages to two voluntary interruptions in their manufacturing operations that took longer than expected to be completed and, thus, has significantly impacted vaccine production. The letter goes on to say that prediction of product availability is difficult, however, customer orders continue to be filled. The latest product shipping information for each of Merck's vaccines is available at MerckVaccines.com™.

Information regarding the shortage of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (Prevnar®) and interim recommendations for its administration can be found in this issue of "Talk to the Doc". The Hawaii Immunization Program (HIP) will keep you abreast of the vaccine shortage/delay situation as information becomes available. Should you have additional concerns or questions regarding vaccine supply, please feel free to call us at 586-8300 (neighbor islands call toll free at 1-800-933-4832).

¹CDC. Update: Supply of Diphtheria and Tetanus Toxoids and Acellular Pertussis Vaccine. MMWR 2001;50:1159.

*Children traveling to countries where the risk for diphtheria is high should be vaccinated according to the Recommended Childhood Immunization Schedule



TALK TO THE DOC...

By Marcia M. Nagao, M.D., M.P.H.

Why do we need to defer doses of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine PCV7 (Prevnar®, Wyeth Lederle), if our office has an adequate supply?

Due to the continuing shortage of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that all health care providers conserve vaccine by decreasing the number of doses administered to healthy infants, rather than leave some infants unvaccinated. Vaccine should continue to be administered to **high-risk children** aged <5 years, as recommended by the ACIP in October 2000.

All health care providers should reduce the number of vaccine doses used and ordered, regardless of their current supply, so that the vaccine will be more widely available until PCV7 supplies become adequate. Providers should use either the AModerate shortage@ or ASevere shortage@ recommendations (see Table), depending on their current PCV7 supply.

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TABLE 1. Updated recommendations for pneumococcal conjugate vaccine use among healthy children during moderate and severe shortages — Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, 2001

Age at first vaccination	Moderate shortage	Severe



If you haven't done so already, please update your Vaccines for Children Provider Enrollment Profile. All VFC Providers are required to update this form annually.

A new and improved Vaccines for Children Provider Toolkit is given to each provider updating their profile. The new Toolkit is intended to serve as a reference manual, providing you with answers to many of the questions you may have regarding the VFC program, its procedures, and requirements. Questions? Call 586-8329. **DON'T DELAY...UPDATE TODAY!**

What's New?

In our effort to serve as a resource for health professionals and their patients, HIP has several new education materials available upon request.

Brochures:

- *Chickenpox Vaccine: What Parents Need to Know* (produced by the AAP)
- *What Every Family Should Know About Shots* (produced by the Hawaii Immunization Program)



Videos on Loan:

- *"Immunization Techniques, Best Practices for Health Care Providers"* (produced by the California Department of Health)



CDC Videos

- *"Anthrax: What Every Clinician Should Know"*
- *"Influenza— Prevention, Detection and Control"*
- *"Smallpox: What Every Clinician Should Know"*

Missed the teleconference course, *Hawaii Immunization Update 2002*? Want to find out more about the new immunization and examination requirements for school entry, VFC program, Teen Vax program, and vaccine management? Videotapes and CD-ROMs of the course are available for loan.

If you are interested in requesting any of these educational materials, please call 586-8323.

Important Phone Numbers

Hawaii Immunization Program 586-8300
(Neighbor Islands, please call toll-free at 1-800-933-4832)

VFC or Teen Vax Project Questions 586-8329
Immunization Posters & Brochures 586-8323
Vaccine Order Inquiries 586-8311

Technical Immunization Questions 586-8314
School Immunization Requirements 586-8313
VFC/AFIX Site Visits 586-8318

National Immunization Hotline (8:00 am to 11:00 pm EST)
International Travel Information (24 hours)
CDC Travel Website

1-800-232-2522
1-877-394-8747
www.cdc.gov/travel

